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A transfer out of poverty

Poverty, equality and growth: the role of social transfers

A handbook for parliamentarians

"It always seems impossible, until it's done."

Nelson Mandela

"No meaningful and sustained economic growth can be achieved in the absence of social protection."

Levi Mwanawasa

A collaboration with

rhvp
Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme

SPII
STUDIES IN POVERTY AND INEQUALITY INSTITUTE
Building up knowledge to break down Poverty

Preface

This handbook has been designed as an aid to building greater awareness and understanding amongst parliamentarians in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) of the role of **social transfers** as a specific **social protection** policy instrument for reducing **chronic poverty** and **inequality** and for promoting **inclusive, or pro-poor, economic growth**.

It is not intended for planners or implementers who undertake the detailed design and execution of social transfer programmes (for a manual that does address these aspects see http://www.epri.org.za/socialtransfersguide.pdf).

It has been prepared specifically for a **southern African** audience and focuses on southern African experience. In particular, it is intended primarily for use in countries where the debate on **comprehensive** and **scaled-up** social transfers is ongoing and where political will remains uncertain.

In terms of content, the handbook provides an **overview of social transfers**; from explaining **what they are** (and what they are not) and **how they work**, to addressing a range of **common concerns** regarding their appropriateness and effectiveness.

It also provides parliamentarians with guidance on how they can use their positions and influence to promote the adoption and expansion of social transfer instruments.

The handbook is meant to be practical, pragmatic and easy to digest. To facilitate this, the use of technical jargon has been restricted as far as possible.

The handbook was prepared for the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) as a component of a cooperative agreement with the Regional Hunger & Vulnerability Programme (RHVP) to strengthen awareness and understanding within parliaments of policy issues related to poverty reduction and the role of social transfers.

Included with the handbook are two DVDs:

"A transfer out of poverty" is a short documentary prepared by RHVP in 2008 which highlights some southern African experiences with the provision of social transfers. It provides a useful discussion of a number of major issues in the current debate and also provides an evidence-based discussion on the impact of a range of social transfers implemented in southern Africa.

"Social transfers in practice" looks in more detail at several social transfer programmes which have been implemented in southern Africa and provides in-depth analysis of each.

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Readers are strongly urged to view both these DVDs in conjunction with reading this handbook.

The editorial team behind the handbook includes John Rook (RHVP), Paul Msoma (SADC-PF) and Isobel Frye (Studies in Poverty & Inequality Institute, SPII). The handbook was edited by Danya Pedra (RHVP). Nicholas Freeland (RHVP) provided constructive critique on the drafts.

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Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 African origins 1

1.2 Why social transfers? 1
1.2.1 Poverty, inequality and growth in southern Africa 1
1.2.2 The need for a different approach 4
1.2.3 Comprehensive and scaled-up systems 5

1.3 Why parliamentarians? 5

2. SOCIAL TRANSFERS 7

2.1 Introduction 7

2.2 What are social transfers? 7
2.2.1 Terminology 7
2.2.2 Why the interest in social transfers? 8
2.2.3 Distinguishing features of social transfers 9
2.2.4 Types of social transfer instruments 9
2.2.5 Why cash? 12

3. THE CASE FOR SOCIAL TRANSFERS 15

3.1 Introduction 15

3.2 Social transfers as a right 15

3.3 Social transfers reduce poverty and hunger 21

3.4 Social transfers and human development 22

3.5 Social transfers and inclusive growth 24

3.6 Social transfers and the MDGs 25

3.7 Social transfers are not enough on their own 26
3.7.1 Social transfers and development 26
3.7.2 Social transfers and humanitarian assistance 26
3.7.3 Social transfers and an enabling environment 26

3.8 Conclusion 26

"A transfer out of poverty"
Poverty, equality & growth: the role of social transfers

4. SOCIAL TRANSFERS PROVISION 28

4.1 Introduction 28

4.2 Poverty-based provision 28

4.3 Categorical provision 29

4.4 Universal provision 30

4.5 Self-selecting provision 31

4.6 Conclusion 32

5. CONCERNS 33

5.1 Introduction 33

5.2 Affordability 33
5.2.1 How much will it cost? 33
5.2.2 Is it value for money? 36
5.2.3 How to pay for social transfers? 36

5.3 Dependency 39

5.4 Opportunity 41

5.5 Graduation 42

5.6 Conditionality 42

5.7 Conclusion 43

6. LESSONS FROM SOCIAL TRANSFERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA 44

6.1 Introduction 44

6.2 The importance of national ownership and political will 44

6.3 Types of provision 44

6.4 Popularity 45

6.5 Balancing aspirations and resources 45

6.6 Inclusive national dialogue 46

6.7 Conclusion 46

7. THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARLIAMENTARIANS 47

7.1 Introduction 47
7.1.1 The importance of coherent policy development 47

7.2 Legislature 48

7.3 Oversight 49

7.4 Representing the needs of the people 49
7.4.1 The role of civil society 50
7.4.2 Delivering on election commitments 50
7.4.3 The role of political parties 51

7.5 Conclusion 51

Abbreviations

BIG	Basic Income Grant
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DECT	Dowa Emergency Cash Transfer Programme
DFID	UK Department for International Development
ESCR	Economic, social, and cultural rights
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHI	Global Hunger Index
HPI	Human Poverty Index
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OAP	Old Age Pension
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RHVP	Regional Hunger & Vulnerability Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC-PF	SADC Parliamentary Forum
SPF	Social Protection Floor
SPII	Studies in Poverty & Inequality Institute
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAT	Value Added Tax
WFP	World Food Programme